

ELSAH HISTORY

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Swamp Milkweed – Elsay, 2013

Historic Preservation and the Land

By Jane Pfeifer, guest editor

The land and natural environment are part of our local history. The three articles in this issue are related to what is broadly called “landscape.” Two of the articles in this issue were written by the guest editor, a layperson, for those who are interested in why things look as they do and why we should care. Dr. Robert Craig, Professor Emeritus, Georgia Tech, School of Architecture, Atlanta, Georgia, wrote the third article. His academic interests include history of architecture and Chinese and English gardens. He is also an expert on Bernard Maybeck at Principia College. His article was written to provide important background on the Principia College National Historic Landmark landscape.

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A number of people have helped me with this issue, and I thank them for their help and patience. Mike Rhaesa and Terrance Harkness patiently corrected the editor’s reports on their work. Robert Craig generously wrote the article and addendum biography about Butler Sturtevant. Danne Rhaesa captured the beautiful images of the Elsah water garden and gave permission for Historic Elsah Foundation’s use of the images in this newsletter. Kris Impastato, archivist of The Principia, supplied images and materials for transcription. She was especially patient in locating certain images that are critical to understanding the text. John Guenther, architect, helped me describe the Principia College Science Center project. Joe Kaposta, the copy editor, helped me be a better writer and did essential proofing for me. If errors remain, they are mine.

Recognizing that some readers may want more detail, the editor has placed a PDF file that is called “Elsah History 105 Addendum” on the Historic Elsah Foundation website to accompany this newsletter. The following are in this Addendum:

1. Mike Rhaesa’s plant list for the Elsah Constructed Wetland;
2. Butler Sturtevant’s plant list transcribed from the design layout of Ewing Woods;
3. Butler Sturtevant, a brief biographical history by Dr. Robert Craig;
4. J. Wilkinson Elliott plant key for the Eliestoun plan;
5. Terrance Harkness’s plant list for the New Science Center Common, Principia College, Elsah, Illinois, transcribed with scientific plant names; and
6. Terrance Harkness’s Résumé.

Water Garden And Constructed Wetland

When Mike Rhaesa began planting the water garden in Elsah, I regret to say I did not even



Elsah Water Garden by Danne Rhaesa

notice. Then, all of sudden, I saw a variety of plants filling an area near the creek with beautiful, abundant, green foliage. Some of the plants had shiny leaves, others had thick leaves, while still others were spiky. Of course, a lot of work took place before I noticed the result. I also learned that one of the plants is very special. Decurrent false aster, *Boltonia decurrens*, has aster-like flowers and is only found in Illinois and Missouri. It is one of the rarest plants in the region.

Here is our story of how and why Mike Rhaesa planted the garden. He told us about it at our spring Historic Elsah Foundation Hosmer Williams Lecture on Thursday, March 20, 2014 at Farley’s Music Hall. This is my report.

Mike Rhaesa has been working with water plants since the early 1990s, when he was living and working in the Kansas City area. He has a

MS in Biology from Southern Illinois University, Edwardsville, with an emphasis in fresh water ecology. Recently he has planted wetlands for Principia College, Great Rivers Land Trust, Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville, and others. The Elsah water garden is an extension of this interest, but also a service to the Village.

While this planting is a garden because of its beauty, it is also a wetland. Wetlands are areas with hydric soil (soil that has been changed by being saturated with water and lacking oxygen) and have a predominance of plants that evolved in water. Perhaps a constructed wetland is a more accurate description of this garden.

Wetlands have diminished greatly both in number and extent in the United States since it was settled by Europeans. In 1600, one third

of Illinois was wetlands. Illinois has lost 90% of these wetlands due in large part to the draining of the vast prairies of central Illinois for farmland.¹ Elsay's modest, constructed wetland is a kind of historic preservation activity for our village. Forty-three (43) percent of America's rare and endangered plants are dependent on wetlands. Besides enhancing the beauty of the village, our constructed wetland contributes in a small way toward the preservation of these plants that have a positive ecological and environmental impact.

During other projects, Mike Rhaesa grew some the plants he used in this constructed wetland. A few of the plants were purchased from Missouri Wildflowers Nursery, south of Jefferson City, Missouri. Even though the plants in the project are native to our area, developing a constructed wetland still requires knowledge of how, where and why specific plants thrive. Rhaesa has learned about these plants, their requirements and responses from both his experience and his research. During the installation period, each morning and

At this point, Rhaesa still checks on his plants, but the wetland could go on without his labor. The wetland appearance will change as the various plants die and seeds disperse to new areas, or plants send out rhizomes into new areas. Plants respond to changes of moisture, light, climate, the presence of competitor plants, and human intervention.

Some benefits of this project

Water plants really like street runoff and the nitrogen from our septic tanks. They feed on the nutrients and purify the water that goes through the garden into the creek. The plants are able to convert pollutants into less toxic compounds. During the growing season, the wetland is both beautiful and useful, but it also has further benefits not dependent on the season.

While there are many sturdy, lovely and useful plants from other countries and locations, native plants are needed by insects, birds, amphibians, reptiles and mammals for food and cover. Pollinators, such as bees and butterflies, are essential for growing plants of all kinds and they are in great distress nationwide. The loss of their habitat is believed to be part of the problem. For example, the Monarch butterfly has been greatly reduced, in part because they need the milkweed plant for survival. Milkweed is a name given to various types of milkweed that grow in dry and wet conditions. Common milkweed's scientific name is *Asclepias syriaca*. Current agricultural practices in fields, buffers and rights-of-way have greatly reduced the milkweed. In the Elsay constructed wetland, Rhaesa planted a swamp milkweed, *Asclepias incarnate*, that Monarchs also utilize.

One of the prime concerns of river towns like Elsay is flooding. Wetlands are sponge-like with large amounts of organic matter accumu-

lated in their hydric soil. So, unlike other developed land areas, wetlands can absorb more water, thus mitigating to a degree the excess water during flooding.

The picture to the right of the old slough at the front of the Village does not look like a garden, but it probably had native plants that are not in view. We hope that more areas along our creek can be planted for their beauty, utility, and history.

A digital Elsay History no. 105 Addendum, located on the Historic Elsay Foundation website, has a plant list for those wishing to learn more detailed information about the plants in



The Slough at Mississippi and Mill Street, 1931, courtesy of The Principia Archives

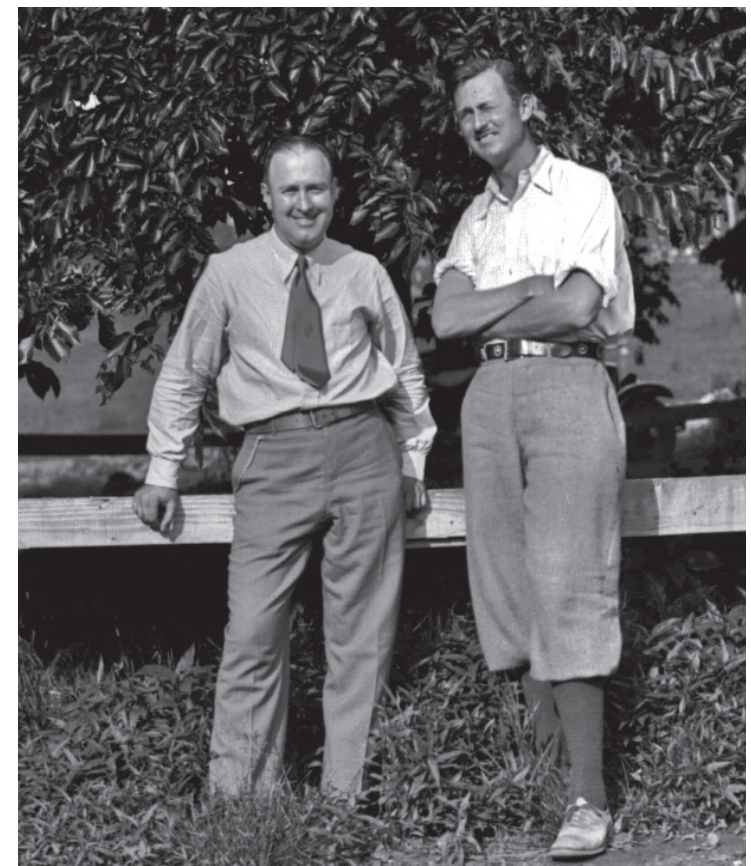
the Elsay constructed wetland. Mike Rhaesa's contact information is also in the Addendum.

Butler Sturtevant and the “Last Master Touch”

By Dr. Robert Craig

Bernard Maybeck described the work of the landscape architect as “the last master touch,”² and it may be ironic that landscape, for Maybeck, was also the first among determinants of a successful architectural project. Architecture, as man's intervention in the natural, sacred landscape, must not intrude, Maybeck argued. Buildings and “hardscape” must appear to have always been there, existing “without disturbing the primeval forests.”³ Much as Maybeck and landscape architect Butler Sturtevant began with an assumption that they were stewards of Elsay's natural landscape and environment, so, today, we are all stewards of Maybeck's and Sturtevant's vision. This is the alpha and omega of the Elsay landscape: nature conserved, in the form and character that the hills, bluffs, woods, and native plants had evolved, yet enhanced, without disturbance, by sensitive landscape design, by compatible roads, paths, retaining walls, and terraces, and by a respectful architecture.

Maybeck was 69 when he first saw Elsay. Butler Sturtevant was a brash young man of 32.



*William E. Morgan, Jr. and Butler S. Sturtevant, July 7, 1932
Courtesy of The Principia*

They respected each other's talents, however, and the college project stands high in the career successes of both.



Mike Rhaesa pulling plants for Elsay by Danne Rhaesa

night, he checked on the plants. He moved certain plants to create better conditions for growth and appearance. This is called adaptive management.

Landscape design, for the non-professional, is sometimes assumed to be only concerned with plants and gardening, but “hardscape” can be a significant contributor to, or detractor from, a landscape vision. Sturtevant’s vision was essentially consistent with the preservation of, and compatibility with, an all-encompassing natural landscape within the campus proper. Impositions on the land by either architect or landscape architect were improper, as would be any arbitrary, artificial, man-made irregularity. Maybeck, for example, wanted no vehicular traffic near his Chapel, and he described pedestrian access paths in terms of stepping stones and natural path materials. “. . . Someone, lovingly, has brought slabs of granite, one at a time, and laid them in a sort of path shape, over the grass to the entrance, putting the surplus stones into a quasi-pavement in front of the Chapel entrance—one or two late comers are silently picking their way along this path—some stones are partly overgrown by grass . . .”⁴ As Maybeck mused to Frederic Morgan in 1934, “Nature and lack of gardeners or conception of need of any, have graciously filled in all beautiful stiffness and smoothed over stupid irregularities.”⁵

Specifically addressing dormitory landscapes, one of the college’s construction reports describes the selection of brick for use in building walls, pavements, and steps on and around Howard House: six varieties were chosen for walls, “sand-molded” in order to give “a more or less handmade appearance.” For pavements and steps and garden borders the Alton Brick Company provided “five varieties of . . . hard-burned paving brick of varying tones.”⁶ Alas, for both Maybeck and Sturtevant, today’s concrete walks (and any comparable road surfaces) would be viewed as disrespectful to the vision.

Similarly, Sturtevant would lament “crew-cut” hedges and bushes rendered unnatural by ma-

chine clipping with power shears. Sturtevant preferred hand pruning that would maintain controlled growth as an organic expression of a timeless natural environment.



Cox Auditorium patio, courtesy of The Principia

It is in the choice of plant materials that Sturtevant’s major contribution is to be found, characterized by the use of native plants, but also marked by a certain daring in selecting species on the basis of visual properties of texture, color, or compositional effect, whether native to the region or not. For instance, in the 1960s, when the college moved tons of earth to fill in a natural ravine to create the School of Nations and School of Government complex with its level terrace adjacent to Cox Auditorium, not only was the campus conspicuously abandoning (in this new, starkly unadorned Modern architecture) Maybeck’s traditional architectural language, but the excavation and filling of the ravine compromised the underlying campus landscape vision of preserving, without intrusion, the natural topography and organic environment of the primeval building site. Sturtevant preserved the small depression in the ground at the northwest corner of the library, where the ravine began its eternal erosion. Moreover, he “saved the day” in the

anonymous space between the administration/government classroom building and the huge brick box of an auditorium: in a master stroke, Sturtevant mass-planted evergreen bushes and birch trees forming a copse of striking white barked tree trunks, rising at varied angles from ground cover and evergreen skirts to present a brilliant display, and, in so doing, Sturtevant created one of the campus’s special places. Images from the same period show the Brooks House entrance space filled with similarly planted birch trees.

On the other hand, the success of the Maybeck-Sturtevant collaboration was because of, not in spite of, the usually compatible relationships among Maybeck’s built works, the existing natural landscape, and added plantings and designed landscape. Fundamentally, the success was based on the landscape architect’s understanding of the architect’s pictorial vision. Like Humphry Repton in the early 19th century,⁷ Maybeck “painted” plants and trees over building elevations, sketching, in pastel chalk over red line drawings, the intended color masses of plants and trees composed in concert with the architectural vision. For the intended effect, Sturtevant then selected hedge

materials, floral plantings, flowering fruit trees, evergreen bushes, and great pines and cedars. He cultivated native redbuds and dogwoods observing how they naturally filtered through campus glades and wooded ravines, and he then planted them as coloristic accents and settings for Maybeck’s architecture, as dazzling a “picture” as “lilac lane” in the spring, or the preserved Ewing Woods in the autumn. “Principia is spending all this money for us to



Ewing Woods Entrance by Astrid List

paint a picture.” Maybeck wrote to his on-site office at Elsah, “Anybody could build houses.”⁸ In many ways, Butler Sturtevant provided the palette.

“Past and Present - Principia College’s Science Common”

By Jane Pfeifer

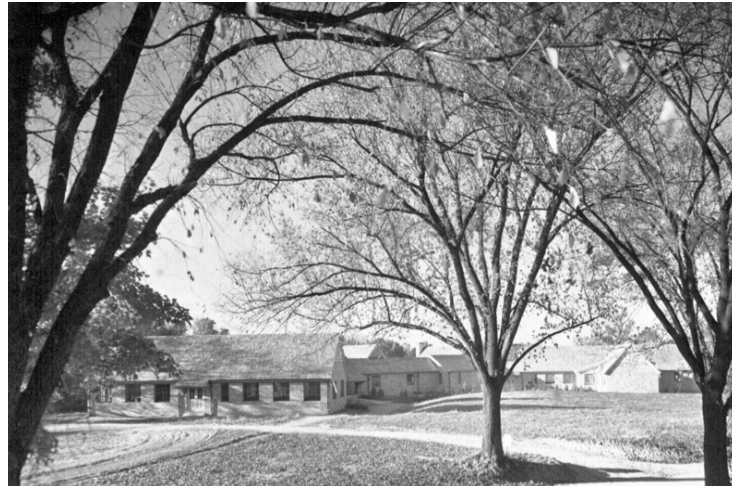
Based on telephone interviews with Terry Harkness, and email and telephone conversations with John Guenther

Bernard Maybeck Buildings and Butler Sturtevant Landscape Plan

Bernard R. Maybeck designed and supervised the construction of the first buildings on The Principia College campus. Eleven still exist on

the campus. Watson Laboratories is one of them. Butler Sturtevant was the landscape architect for the campus during the initial building and continued afterward until he retired in 1969.

Based on the photographs on the next page you can see what Watson Laboratories looked like right after construction, and how the appearance changed with the landscaping.



Watson Laboratories prior to planting, courtesy of The Principia

Compared to current ideas in landscape design, Sturtevant seems formal in his choice of plants, such as evergreens at entrances, and the dense fill of the area around the building. Yet, as Robert Craig explains in his article in this issue, Sturtevant was also committed to native plants and creating a site in which the buildings, landscape and land forms unite in a harmonious composition.

In addition to a building's exterior appearance, Maybeck intended that his buildings themselves be part of the learning experience beyond merely providing a location for classes and lectures. Principia faculty, staff and students have felt over the years that new additions to the College campus should continue to express this ideal.

A Science Building

When the original Watson Laboratories and its additions no longer met the needs of the Science Departments, Principia College decided that they needed new and improved facilities. They wanted to have a building that represented the best practices related to the environment. After going through the design process with one St. Louis architectural firm and receiving bids for a new building much higher than expected, they decided to try an-



Watson Laboratories cactus garden by Charles Trefts, courtesy of The Principia

other firm for a different design and approach. In 1995, Principia hired Mackey Mitchell Architects.

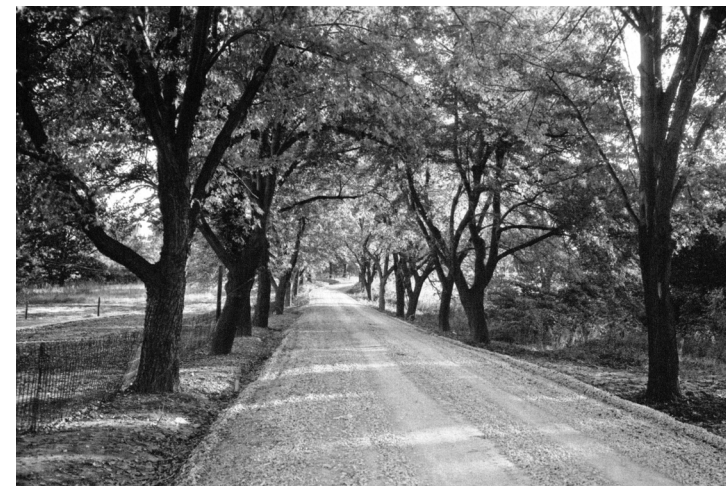
Mackey Mitchell Architects was the design firm and firm of record for the Science Center; John C. Guenther, FAIA, LEED AP was the design architect. In addition to designing a building that teaches as well as being a learning environment, Guenther sought to acknowledge the architecture of Bernard Maybeck by various design elements echoing Maybeck. Some of these include the staircase railing design, halls with landscape views, use of glass brick, intimate meeting or gathering spaces and stained concrete floors.

The landscape firm of Sasaki Associates (Principal, Stuart Dawson, FASLA, 64 Pleasant Street, Watertown, MA 02472) was chosen for the landscape design surrounding the building. Sasaki is well known in the landscape design field, with such important commissions as Charleston Waterfront Park, Dallas Arts District, John F. Kenney Center for the Performing Arts. Native plants were chosen by a subcontractor, Terrance Harkness, landscape architect. At the time of the commission he was a professor at University of Illinois, Department of Landscape Architecture. He is today a professor emeritus.

Principia's desire for a teaching and sustainable building extended to the exterior landscape. The building committee was composed of administrators and faculty. Involved in each part of the design, and aided by Dr. Sarah Perkins, head of the biology department, the committee was determined to preserve the use of native plants, both as continuation of the college's original design philosophy, and to provide students with environmental and learning experiences with local flora.

Past Land Use

Terry Harkness, landscape architect, studied Butler Sturtevant's landscape as it existed on the campus, and specifically near Watson Laboratories. He knew about Sturtevant's work and the goals he was trying to achieve.



Entrance road in 1930 just after purchase by George Redden, courtesy of The Principia

In addition to respecting the integration of the Maybeck National Historic Landmark building and the Sturtevant designed landscape, Harkness's design reflects other past uses of the land.

Harkness added to the canopy of the large native trees that lined the way to the main campus area. As seen in the photograph taken shortly after the purchase of the property in late 1930, the line of trees from the front gate was already present.

Previous owners, architects and landscape architects influenced the campus property prior to Principia's ownership. During the Turner ownership, J. Wilkinson Elliott, an early and well-known landscape architect, designed the Eliestoun estate landscape. Elliott wrote the book, *A Plea for Hardy Plants* which includes an image of the Eliestoun plan. Prior to the building of Eliestoun, the property was known as the James E. Starr Farm. It was a fruit farm specializing in wine grapes. Starr was listed in the Transactions of the Illinois State Horticultural Society in 1876 as "Elsah President, Hort'l Society of Southern Illinois."

The central Principia College campus is located on the former site of the Notch Cliff estate. Both before and after the building of Notch Cliff mansion, the land was farmed, with a farm house located at the site of the current Chapel. In the midst of the proposed campus was an apple orchard. It was kept by Sturtevant and remains today, although not in its full glory.



Apple orchard by Charles Trefts, courtesy of The Principia

Sturtevant and Harkness

Sturtevant had a landscape nursery on campus to start small plants, shrubs and trees. These landscape materials would be ready for later installation. Harkness, too, urged using small trees and plants, letting them mature in place instead attempting to plant large mature plants for an immediate, finished design. At the time of planting in 1997, the trees looked small, but today (17 years later) they blend with the old trees.

One of Harkness’s special contributions to landscape architecture is his approach to design.⁹ He recognized that various models, representing differing conditions and requirements, exist on a site and he developed his plant list based on the differing models. These models or divisions at the Science Center include:

- a. Canopy
- b. Evergreen trees
- c. Powerline/understory trees
- d. Shrub Layer medium
- e. Shrub Layer/low
- f. Evergreen Shrub Layer
- g. Ground Layer
- h. Savanna/grassland

When Principia purchased and developed the Principia College property, labor was very inexpensive. There were large landscape crews who maintained and hand trimmed bushes and shrubs. With these large landscape crews, the plantings grew lush and filled the campus with large trees and vines on the buildings. When labor became in short supply during WWII, the landscape continued to be maintained in part by students.

As new buildings were constructed and revised, landscape plantings installed, the landscape changed. Trimming was no longer done by hand, but by a machine, adding another

substantial change in appearance. Some of the large Juniper pfitzers, *Juniper chinensis*, were replaced with low growing ground cover juniper along the Chapel drive and elsewhere. One of the changes to the “hardscape” was that the brick sidewalks were covered with asphalt. Ease of maintenance became a high priority. Most recently, with climate change, plants need to survive longer and more frequent dry periods.

With these priorities in mind, the landscape chosen by Harkness was not as dense, and smaller planting beds were placed around the building. Also, Harkness chose some plant sizes that would create the type and character of the larger plants, but require less maintenance. Turf became a larger part of the Science Common than in the previous landscape. These were both practical and in some ways aesthetic modern choices. It also reflects that the historic landscape of the Principia College central campus was actually farm land prior to 1930.

While Harkness is an expert on native plants, his plant list also includes sustainable and nonnative (exotic) plants. These include the non-invasive Emerald Mound Honeysuckle, *Lonicera xylostium* ‘Emerald Mound’, Periwinkle, *Vinca major* or *Vinca minor*, and Lily Turf, *Liriope spicata*.

Looking back at the plans of 17 years ago, some trees did not survive and were not replaced. Some substitutions were made in place of specified plants. For example, on the east side of the Science Center, Asian dogwood, *Cornus kousa*, was planted instead of native white flowering dogwood, *Cornus florida*. At the time of installation, native white flowering dogwood, *Cornus florida*, was subject to disease whereas the *Cornus kousa* was not. Some plantings have thrived. Native to the southwestern United States, the Bottlebrush buckeye, *Aesculus parviflora*, has grown very



Science Center Bottlebrush buckeye by Jane Pfeifer

large, perhaps too much so, as it currently blocks views out the windows of the building. Implementing a landscape plan is an ongoing process.

The faculty composition and commitment has changed. Dr. Perkins left Principia College to take an administrative position at St. Louis Community College at Florissant Valley. When faculty supervision of the native planting ceased, the Facilities Department took over the regular maintenance and supervision.

Prospects for the future

Historically, environmental studies has been one of the strong programs at Principia College. Whether one is talking about Dr. Percival Robertson, “Doc” Wanamaker, Dr. Sarah Perkins, or the current faculty members, there has been strong faculty and student interest in

and study of the environments in near and far locations.

Certainly, the immediate landscape around the Science Center, or even a larger view of the campus as a whole, could become a model and laboratory for student learning about native plants. In order to make the campus, or even part of the campus, a model or laboratory, an integrative approach is needed by administrative and service departments, as well as faculty and students, in the planning of landscape and related activities. This may be difficult given the many worthy competing activities of the campus. While a broad use of native plants is not the current reality, there are plans that could be realized.

Robert Matthew “Bob” Cronin Remembered

Below is the obituary from Bob’s family sent to the local Alton newspaper, The Telegraph. If a single word could describe Bob’s life, it would be family.

Bob and his wife, June, were parents of a large, wonderful family. They were also active in the Elsah community. Each of their children, in turn, have become contributing members of their own communities. Bob showed us how to care for family when he and his brothers lovingly cared for his own sweet mother, Nettie Cronin, a long-time Elsah resident. His own family has done the same for Bob and June.

Bob’s devotion to family extended to service for the community. He served his country in World War II. He served his community as a leader in the Boy Scouts and also as volunteer for the Fire Protection District. He served our schools as part of the parents’ association. He served his church in large and small ways, whether at the annual fund raising dinners or in his daily devotions.

We thank the Cronin family for their being part of Elsah. We are grateful that June, his wife, an active community member, still lives in here. Terri Darr, their daughter, continues the family tradition of service as a Board member of Historic Elsah Foundation. Bob Cronin will be greatly missed and remembered with gratitude for his example of family.

BOB CRONIN

ELSAH - Robert “Bob” Matthew Cronin, died at 8:14 p.m., Friday, March 21, 2014, at Alton Memorial Hospital surrounded by his loving family.

He was born in Elsah on Jan. 6, 1925, one of four children born to the late John and Annetta (Bechtold) Cronin.

Bob graduated from Alton High School and soon enlisted with the US Navy where he served his country honorably in World War II. After returning from service, Bob began his career with Laclede Steel Company, where he dedicated 38 years of hard work and service as an Iron Worker before retiring in 1989.

Bob was an avid outdoorsman and amateur naturalist who enjoyed the simplicities of nature and passed his love and knowledge of the outdoors on to his children. He was active in the Boy Scouts of America, receiving the Silver Beaver Award in honor of his hard work, self-sacrifice, dedication, and impact on the lives of youth through his many years of service. He was a former member of the Elsah Volunteer Emergency Corps; as well as the VFW Post 1308 in Alton. Bob enjoyed gardening, hunting and fishing, but above all truly cherished the time spent with his family. He married the former June Rister in November of 1947 at the St. Michael’s Catholic Church in Beltrees and together they have shared the last 66

years together.

Also surviving are nine children and their spouses, Rose Mary and James Towey of Godfrey, Mike and Jennifer Cronin of Port Townsend, Wash., Dan and Dorothy Cronin of Elsah, Christine and Gordon White of Jacksonville, Terri and Mark Darr of Godfrey, John and Jennifer Cronin of Fiel-don, Dave and Rhonda Cronin of Dow, Fred Cronin of Godfrey, and Tom Cronin of Elsah; nineteen grandchildren; and seven great-grandchildren; along with a brother, Edgar Cronin of Alton.

In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by a sister, Pat Farmer, and a brother, Jim Cronin.

Visitation will be from 4-7 p.m. Tuesday, March 25, at Crawford Funeral Home in Jerseyville where funeral services will be conducted at 11 a.m. Wednesday. Burial will be at the Elsah Cemetery in Elsah.

In lieu of flowers and plants, memorials may be given to the Historic Elsah Founda-tion or to St. Patrick’s Catholic Church in Grafton where Bob was a member.

Historic Elsah Foundation is grateful to re-port that many donations have been received in Bob’s memory. The following is a list of the



Cronin Family, November 5, 2012, Bob and June Cronin’s 65th Anniversary, courtesy of the Cronin family

donor names as of June 1, 2014. We thank the donors and Bob’s family for designating His-toric Elsah Foundation in this way. These do-nations will continue to be recognized as part of the current capital campaign on our wall of honor in Farley’s Music Hall.

Dr. and Mrs. Mark Allendorph
Gretchen and Roger Batz
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Mr. & Mrs. Jeffrey T. Blackorby
Mr. & Mrs. Craig Brangenberg
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Mrs. Betty R. Varble
Debbie and James Vonnahmen
Megan L. Williams
Mr. and Mrs. Matthew Williams
Virginia Williams

¹ According to the U S Geological Survey water Supply Paper 2425, between 50 and 85 percent of the wetlands no longer exist in the United States. See “Technical Aspects of Wetlands History of Wetlands in the Conterminous United States” by Thomas E. Dahl and Gregory J. Allord.

² The Principia Archives, Elsah, Illinois, Maybeck and White Collection, Correspondence, Bernard R. Maybeck to Frederic E. Morgan, April 19, 1932.

³ The Principia Archives, Elsah, Illinois, Maybeck and White Collection, Philosophy Essay by Bernard R. Maybeck.

⁴ The Principia Archives, Elsah, Illinois, Maybeck and White Collection, Correspondence, Annie Maybeck for Bernard Maybeck to Frederic E. Morgan, October 17, 1935.

⁵ The Principia Archives, Elsah, Illinois, Maybeck and White Collection, Correspondence, Bernard R. Maybeck to Frederic E. Morgan, March 25, 1934.

⁶ The Principia Archives, Elsah, Illinois, Maybeck and White Collection, Construction Field Reports, Edward Hussey Construction Report # 21, August 31, 1931.

⁷ See Humphry Repton’s Red Books.

⁸ The Principia Archives, Elsah, Illinois, Maybeck and White Collection, Correspondence, Bernard R. Maybeck to Edward Hussey and Charles Lundgren, October 7, 1931.

⁹ http://landarch.illinois.edu/portfolio/facultypublications/downloadables/Native_Plants_of_East_Central_Illinois.pdf; Native Plants at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

¹⁰ Campus: A Sourcebook for Landscape Architects and Contractors by James Wescoat and Florrie Wescoat with Yung-Ching Lin, Campaign, IL, October 2007.

Historic Elsah Foundation News



Tim Tomlinson, President of the Historic Elsah Foundation

Greetings to members and other readers of Elsah History. I would like to take this opportunity to let you know what's happening with Historic Elsah Foundation, in this our 43rd year as a historic preservation organization. The timing is propitious—this year is the 50th anniversary of the Historic Preservation Act of 1964. Historic Elsah Foundation, the Village of Elsah, and our region and beyond owe a great deal to Charles Hosmer, Paul Williams, and others who provided the leadership that responded to the challenges and opportunities that were at the heart of the Historic Preservation Act.

Fifty years later, what about us? What about today? Does what we are doing now demonstrate clearly we know and understand our connections to the founders and their dreams? I think so.

First, the founders understood the need for stable financing. I want to announce the public phase of a Capital Campaign, a serious effort to raise funds for Historic Elsah preservation activities, building on earlier efforts for an endowment program to provide long-term support for our historic properties—the Ice House and Farley's. Long-term support for periodically high cost but necessary maintenance activities is a problem for organizations such as Historic Elsah Foundation. We can predict long-term expenditures. We have to build long-term support. The Capital Campaign is our

response. We will be contacting you separately about how you can support the campaign.

Second, you should know we have an ongoing and thriving lecture program. The Hosmer-Williams Series stimulates interest in local history in an engaging and practical manner—five lectures per year, funded in part by Liberty Bank of Godfrey, Illinois, with attendance growing each year. The series clearly speaks to the mission statement of our organization, and we are pleased with the response of the regional community. With the promotion of local history in mind, HEF will sponsor a Local History Academic Symposium in April 2015, with all the features you would expect from such an event—keynote address, a host of individual lectures, and a follow-up publication. We plan also a school component for the Symposium, reaching out to regional teachers.

I believe “preservation is progress,” and I see our Capital Campaign, the Hosmer-Williams Lecture Series, and the Academic Symposium as examples of preservation: local buildings and the local knowledge base. These are leadership actions. We are involved currently in another leadership action that I hope will have long-term outcomes. The “now” is a coalition that brings together HEF with the Chautauqua Historical Society and the Grafton Historical Society as part of a state-wide effort to commemorate the 150th anniversary of Abraham Lincoln's death and the return of his body to Springfield, Illinois. We have agreed to build a coffin that closely resembles the original Lincoln coffin. We are partnering Mosby Woodworks of Grafton, Illinois, a specialty lumber company in St. Louis, Brooks Brothers of New York City, the Batesville Casket Company, the Library of Congress and the National Archives, the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library, and others. The coffin will be completed soon, and will make the journey from Washington, D.C. to Springfield, Illinois, April 21-May 2, 2015. We plan also a Lincoln Coffin Book, a compilation of our research findings and decisions. A limited edition, the book will be

donated to selected libraries and will be available to the general public as an Ebook. We are working on a Lincoln event for Alton, Illinois in October 2015.

We are self-supporting. We seek corporate sponsors for programs and activities. Our annual Home for the Holidays tour is a mainstay of our fundraising efforts. We need members who pay annual dues. We need people who agree that “preservation is progress,” willing to donate to our Capital Campaign. Would the founders approve? I think so.

Tim Tomlinson, President

Hosmer Williams Lecture Series, sponsored by Liberty Bank of Godfrey, IL.

Our two spring lectures were by Mike Rhaesa, plantsman, on “Beauty and the Swamp,” and James Price, historian and curator of the exhibit at Lewis and Clark Community College, “Let the Church Say Amen - Rocky Fork Church in Voice and Vision.”

This year's lectures are held at Farley's Music Hall, 37 Mill Street, Elsah, Illinois. The fall the lectures include:

Thursday, September 25 at 7:30 pm, George Provenzano, lecturer and author, *The River and War and Peace*.

Thursday, November 20 at 7:30 pm, Dr. Richard Sparks, lecturer and marine biologist, *The Changing River: Biology and the Environment*.

Contra Dancing Once a Month.

We continue to support our local contra dance night, on the second Saturday of the month from 7 to 10 pm, every month from September through May. Mark and Susan Young have been the organizers. There is live music, a caller, and refreshments for a modest fee. HEF provides Farley's Music Hall for no charge in order to support this community event. There is a voluntary donation to HEF from the dancers.

Eliestoun Rescue

Principia announced in the “Wire” www.principiawire.com/2014/08/presidents-update-a-productive-summer-an-exciting-new-year/ that a group called Friends of Eliestoun is setting up a separate not-for-profit organization to save the building from demolition. This effort is from current and former staff, alumni and interested preservationists who recognize the historic, educational, and practical value of the building. The Principia has set a deadline for Friends of Eliestoun to obtain pledges of \$100,000 by end of December 2014 to demonstrate that they have the seed money to go forward.

For more information read the Friends of Eliestoun Facebook page, www.facebook.com/historiceliestoun. It provides information on how to pledge a donation. You can also e-mail questions to friendsofeliestoun@gmail.com.

Elsah Grace

Elsah Grace, daughter of Jasmine Barbee, was born April 25, 2014. Jasmine Barbee's grandmother lived in Elsah as a child. So, in honor of her grandmother and our sweet village, there is a new baby named Elsah Grace. We wish the very best to Elsah Grace and her parents. We hope Elsah Grace visits us soon, with her parents taking her for a walk around Elsah in her pram.

Facebook

Have you “liked” us? We continue to post our activities on both on our website and our Facebook page, www.facebook.com/historicelsah.

Home for the Holidays 2014

Join Us for a Special Holiday House Tour and Celebration

Saturday, December 6, 2014 from noon to 4 pm



Photograph by Cindy Ira

Take a step back in time in the quaint, historic Village of Elsah, Illinois.

You're invited to tour selected private residences decorated for the holidays. Visit with the homeowners; learn the history of the house. The whole village retains the character and feel of a bygone time. The homes on the tour were generally constructed in the mid-19th century, often with stone from the local quarry.

Musical entertainment will take place in both churches in the village, and is nondenominational.

Visit our bed and breakfasts, The Green Tree Inn and Maple Leaf Cottage Inn, and the Village of Elsah Museum with their special international holiday exhibit.

Ticket Prices and Purchase Locations

Starting in October, advance tickets can be purchased at the Convention and Visitors Bureau in Alton, and at local bed and breakfast businesses: Green Tree Inn and Maple Leaf Cottage Inn.

Advance ticket: \$15

Day of event ticket: \$18

Carriage rides are available and included in the cost of the ticket.

Lunch at Farley's is catered by My Just Desserts of Alton for an additional cost of \$11.

Also, ticket purchases are available online using Paypal at www.historicelsah.org.

Historic Elsah Foundation Thanks Our Sponsors, Donors, Members, and Volunteers

Liberty Bank, Godfrey, Illinois, 2014 Hosmer Williams Lecture Series Sponsor

Grafton Technologies, Inc. Jerseyville, Illinois, 2013 Home for the Holidays Sponsor

Jersey State Bank, Jerseyville, Illinois, 2013 Home for the Holidays Sponsor

CNB Bank & Trust, Jerseyville, Illinois, 2013 Home for the Holidays Sponsor